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Ashtrays help in effort to get butts off Brand Boulevard

By Alex Dobuzinskis
Staff Writer

Wednesday, July 14, 2004 - GLENDALE -- Unsightly cigarette butts spurred city officials and a citizens committee to put 28 box-shaped ashtrays along a three-block stretch of Brand Boulevard through downtown, and organizers believe the pilot program is working.

Glendale is one of nine cities in the country involved in a campaign against cigarette butts overseen by the Connecticut-based Keep America Beautiful Inc.

Glendale applied to be in the program, and organizers targeted Brand Boulevard because it was often littered with butts. "On the sidewalk, in the tree wells, in the planters -- everywhere," said Sandra Rodriguez, public education specialist with Glendale Neighborhood Services.

"We check (the boxes) every Thursday and empty them, and they're getting a lot of use," she said.

The 28 boxes were installed June 11 on poles on both sides of the 100-300 blocks of Brand. The boxes will stay there indefinitely.

The Committee for a Clean and Beautiful Glendale was involved in linking up with Keep America Beautiful, which provided \$1,500 to publicize the program. City government spent \$1,725 on the boxes and other material, Rodriguez said. Out of concern that smokers were not noticing what the boxes were for, city workers on Wednesday placed "ashtray" stickers on them.

"Definitely it's a good idea," said Roselito De La Cuesta, 52, who works as a customer service representative on Brand. The boxes will make it easier for smokers to dispose of their butts, he said.

Volunteers from the Committee for a Clean and Beautiful Glendale go out weekly to assess how clean the street is now that the boxes have been installed. They will release results of their research later this summer.

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